

The Journal of
Employee Assistance



**New Year,
New EAP?**

The State of EAP | Page 20



Employee Assistance
Professionals Association

PLUS:

**Assessing
Municipal
Leadership**
| Page 8

**Suicide
Prevention**
| Page 12

**Future
Trends
in EAP**
| Page 24

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The Journal of Employee Assistance

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cover story

20 The State of EAP

| By David Sharar, Tom Bjornson and Alex Mackenze

What is going on in the EA profession, as we embark upon a new year? While there is bad news, there is definitely good news to report as well.

features

8 Assessing Municipal Leadership

| By Jane de Colgyl

EAP “takeaways” were gleaned from a unique seminar and survey that evaluated leadership skills and the functioning of municipal organizations.

12 Developing a Workplace Suicide Prevention Program

| By Sally Spencer-Thomas

Very few managers have been given any substantial training in how to identify people in a suicide crisis and link those who are struggling to life-saving care. EAPs can play a critical role in closing this gap.

features

24 Future Trends in EAP

| By Mark Attridge and John Burke

Key findings from a recent survey revealed what some EA professionals probably already suspected: the organizations we work with are eager for services that are more *proactive*.

28 Commentary

Six industry leaders share their thoughts on The State of EAP and Future Trends in EAP articles.

departments

4 FRONT DESK

5, 15 NEWS BRIEFS

10 TECH TRENDS

6 EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

19 LEGAL LINES

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Index of Advertisers

American Substance Abuse Professionals.....	11
Boys Town Hospital	13
Daybreak EAP Software.....	7
Dept. of Army - MEDCELL.....	15
EAPA Learning Center.....	IFC
EAPA Learning Center.....	16-18
Employee Care.....	23
Family Credit Management	BC
National SAP Network.....	19
SAPlist.com	23, 29
The SASSI Institute	9

IFC: Inside Front Cover
BC: Back Cover



Overcoming Obstacles in the New Year

By Maria Lund, LEAP, CEAP

Welcome to the first *Journal of Employee Assistance* of the New Year! While readers are now familiar with the *JEA*'s fresh new look, we hope to make still more improvements. The Communications Panel has three new members this year, Bernie McCann, Jan Paul and Michelle Zadrozny. With their help, we plan on publishing more articles with an international focus and broadening our perspective to include information for younger EA professionals and those who do primarily EA counseling work. Let us know where you think we can improve so the *JEA* can be a valuable practice tool for all EAPA members.

Speaking of change and a new year, this issue focuses on overcoming obstacles standing in the way of advancing the EA field. David A. Sharar, Tom Bjornson, and Alex Mackenzie examine our profession in this month's cover story, "The State of EAP: Observations from the Trenches." According to the authors, a fundamental problem is our reluctance to demonstrate our value. The time has come, they note, to put more effort into measuring workplace outcomes.

Mark Attridge and John Burke examine a study about trends in EAP. To date, EAPs have typically offered programs and services that are primarily reactive in nature.

According to the authors, the organizations we work with are eager for services that are more *proactive*, preventative and strategic in nature. While the opportunity exists for us to play a more proactive and consultative role in the workplaces we serve, the key question, according to Attridge and Burke – is whether we, as a field, will take advantage of it.

Because *future trends* are important to all of us, we asked a number of noteworthy individuals in our profession to offer their insights on these articles. As we all plan ahead, the ideas from these articles provide good food for thought.

Apart from the focus on trends and potential solutions to EAP issues, there are other important topics presented in this issue. Jane de Colgyll describes how her EAP worked with municipal leaders as they went "undercover" to gain perspective on problems and needs in their respective towns. She explains the benefits the organization and the EAP gained from this initiative. It's a unique undertaking worth reading.

Across the globe, there has been a disturbing trend toward higher suicide rates. As EA practitioners it is helpful to know how to address difficult questions and issues relating to the effect of suicide on the workplace. Sally

Spencer-Thomas presents practical tips on implementing a workplace suicide prevention program.

Finally, our other standard contributors, Marina London, Jeffrey Harris, and Sandra Nye, offer insightful and practical ideas in their respective columns. Happy reading. ❖

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Social Media Vital to Younger Workers

The desire of younger employees to use social media, mobile devices, and the Internet more freely in the workplace is strong enough to influence their future job choice even more than salary, according to an international study published by Cisco.

The second-annual *Cisco Connected World Technology Report* surveyed more than 2,800 college students and young professionals in 14 countries.

The study revealed that one in three college students and young employees under the age of 30 (33%) – collectively known as Generation Y – said that they would prioritise social media freedom, device flexibility, and work mobility over salary in accepting a job offer, indicating that the expectations and priorities of the next generation of the world’s workforce are not solely tied to money.

More than two of five college students (40%) and young employees (45%) said they would accept a lower-paying job that had more flexibility with regard to device choice, social media access, and mobility than a higher-paying job with less flexibility. More than half of college students globally (56%) also said that if they encountered a company that banned access to social media, they would either not accept a job offer or would join and find a way to circumvent corporate policy about the use of social media.

The study was commissioned by Cisco and conducted by InsightExpress, a third-party market research firm based in the U.S. The

14 countries were: the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Russia, India, China, Japan and Australia.

Cost Savings Hidden in Electronic Records

Several recent studies have shown that the majority of doctors in the U.S. have not adopted the standardized use of Electronic Health Records (EHR), and one expert believes it’s one of the driving forces behind rising health care costs.

Preliminary estimates from the 2010 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS), which is conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), showed that the percentage of physicians with EHRs that met the criteria of a basic EHR system by state ranged from 12.5% to 51.5%. However, after excluding 27 states with unreliable estimates the percentage of physicians having fully functional systems that met the criteria ranged from only 9.7% to 27%.

“The cost savings of having widespread adoption of EHR in the U.S. health care industry would reduce health care costs by more than \$720 billion per year,” states Dr. Angel Garcia, CEO of EHR solutions provider Global Medical Consultants. “That’s actually more than enough savings to insure all 47 million Americans currently without health insurance.”

What perplexes Garcia is other recently released data, which suggests that nearly one-third of physicians *are* using mobile devices such

as iPads –but the role of technology in their *practices* is unclear.

“It’s time for the health care industry to adopt an electronic solution for not just record-keeping but more importantly for clinical tracking of medical problems that will make their patients safer and health care affordable,” Dr. Garcia concludes.

Illness & Injury – Employees are Vulnerable

Most workers say they derive satisfaction from their jobs, but only roughly one-third say they have actively prepared for being sidelined from work due to an injury or illness, even though nearly nine out of 10 say they know there are steps they can take to protect themselves. These are some of the findings from a Yankelovich survey among full- and part-time employees conducted for CIGNA.

Fortunately, more employers are investing in workplace wellness programs, even in a struggling economy. A recent Hewitt Associates survey indicates that almost two-thirds (65%) of employers say they invest in long-term solutions to improve the overall health and productivity of their workforce.

But a disconnect about the issue between employees and management is still prevalent in many companies – a niche that the EA professional may be prepared to educate both about. For instance, only 12% of workers Yankelovich surveyed identified workplace wellness programs as a way to help them prepare for the possibility that an injury or illness could keep them out of work for more than just a few days.



Developing Business Acumen for Greater Credibility

| By Jeffrey Harris, MFT, CEAP

The year was 2005, and I was sitting in a boardroom at the headquarters of a large financial services company in Los Angeles. Around the table were 35 “captains” of the business from the western U.S., including CEOs, bank presidents, senior VPs of sales... and one EAP consultant. How I managed to become a consultant to this group started as a very purposeful and patient yearlong campaign to learn the business of my customer.

Let me expand on that path, to illustrate the topic of building management consulting credibility through business acumen.

The Homework Comes First

I started my campaign by scouring the company intranet for information about the inner workings of the company. I studied organizational charts and phone rosters; dug through archived employee newsletters and annual reports; read and re-read the “elevator speeches” provided to salespersons for winning new business. I consulted with my EAP peers in the company to collect their organizational knowledge.

In most every client intake, I made it a point to ask the employee about their job title, daily functions of their position, challenges of the work, and the reporting structure of the department. I began reframing problems into business issues or work impacts.

Soon, I could describe the difference between institutional asset management, fund analytics, brokerages, lock boxes and wealth management, to name a few. This knowledge could then be used to shape some suggested solutions within the management consultation opportunities that appeared. When you think about your own customer organization... where can *you* find information similar to this?

Act Like You Belong

Once I felt confident in a basic understanding of the business, I arranged for a meet-and-greet with the CEO or president of each unit, often through an HR contact or a manager for whom I had provided a helpful management consultation.

I used the meetings to ask the business leader for his/her vision for the unit, the key strategies for that business year, and the challenges the leader thought they might encounter. I made sure to talk like a businessperson rather than a therapist. Then I asked how the EAP, through our workshops and consulting, could help the workforce contribute towards those strategies. Often, the leader would ask me what the “pulse” of the workforce was, so I came prepared to talk about themes or trends, without sacrificing client confidentiality.

I followed up the interviews by sharing an article of interest, or placing an occasional call to

check in. Later, this provided me with greater levels of access to the business leaders.

What steps can *you* take to move towards high levels of access? Consider using solid “EAP ambassadors” that *you* have cultivated to get *yourself* introduced to key leaders in the organization. Work on developing courage to mingle with company leaders, and conduct yourself with professionalism, to help communicate that *you* are a trusted resource to the leadership of the company.

Think Like a Manager

I have come to learn that any action or solution you suggest for a manager is likely to cost the company... in terms of money or time. I started demonstrating restraint and respect for this fact, which gained respect from the managers.

I sought to understand the cyclical or predictable periods of ramped-up production or deadlines. These cycles helped explain low turnout for brown-bag lectures and seasonal increases in utilization for employees seeking stress management. For instance, I never scheduled EAP events or meetings at the end of a reporting period, which is always an intense time for a financial services company.

You ‘Get Us’

So just how *did* I get an invitation to join the quarterly leadership

roundtable at this financial services company? A senior director hosted an annual springtime “university,” where employees attended workshops to learn about other business lines to increase their ability to cross-sell. I had attended many classes during my campaign to learn the business, and soon was offered the ability to present a class each year on the topics of productivity and performance in the human side of business.

In 2005, my workshop on behaviors, which support excellence, was better attended than most other topics at the event, largely because the topic related directly to the needs of the people working within the company. Soon after, this senior director called to say, “You ‘get us’” and offered the invitation to have a

regular seat at the quarterly leadership meeting.

If you want to hear a leader say, “you ‘get us’” it will help to start thinking of your EAP as more than merely a free counseling service. Instead, learn the *business* of your customer organization and find critical contributions within that realm.

Join the Dialogue

If you work as an EAP advisor in a MBHO or call center, see my blog entry on *Tips To Building Business Acumen for External EAPs*. The blog site is titled **Consulting for the Human Side of Business**, where I post interviews of master class consultants, tie consulting skills to current events, and share consulting concepts of my own origin. The

blog address is <http://humansideconsulting.wordpress.com>.

For more consulting essentials, or to review a bibliography on business acumen and other management skills, visit the **EAP Management Consulting Knowledgebase**, hosted by the Los Angeles Chapter of EAPA (www.eapa-la.com/consulting). ❖

Jeffrey Harris, MFT, CEAP has provided management consulting to a wide variety of organizations throughout his 17-year career in employee assistance, including corporate, government and union organizations. Jeff currently serves as Program Manager of EAP and WorkLife at the University of Southern California, and webmaster for the Los Angeles and Houston Chapters of EAPA. The author also has 12 years of experience as a manager, from which he draws insight for his consulting. Jeff may be contacted at jeffharris@humanresourcefulness.net.

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Assessing Municipal Leadership & Organization

A Valuable EAP Experiment!

“Participants now call me more readily for management consultations and about far more complex and organizationally intimate issues than they did previously.”

By Jane de Colgyll, MEd, LSW, CEAP

In the process of brainstorming ideas for a municipal leadership series, our EAP Training Team developed a seminar to assist managers to evaluate both their leadership skills and the functioning of their municipal organizations. We found the seminar design benefited not only attendees, but also EAP consultants and the municipal leaders who volunteered to participate as panelists in this experiment. This article will explore:

- The content and unique design of this seminar;
- The value of offering the survey and “undercover boss” exercise to enhance the EAP professional relationship with client companies; and
- How to implement this program.

Seminar Design

The focus of the AllOne Health (AOH) Employee Assistance Program seminar was on municipalities. We found municipal leaders who were willing to: 1) distribute a 360-degree assessment tool to their employees to assess their management skills; 2) go “undercover” to learn about what was happening in various departments in their respective towns, inspired by the CBS TV show *Undercover Boss*; and, 3) attend a regional training to discuss their experience in front of their peers.

The Survey

We reassured municipal leaders that the survey was totally confidential and that only they and the EAP consultant would see the results. After many modifications, the 360-degree Assessment Tool examined five key qualities of a leader: *Self Confidence, People Skills, Communication Skills, Leadership Skills* and *Control of Stress*.

The survey offered opportunities to check boxes ranging from Very Low to Very High after each of the 36 survey statements. To ensure confidentiality, no room was left for specific comments about the leader from the respondent. Respondents typically elected not to identify what department they worked for.

The survey was distributed electronically to the self-selected municipal leaders. They, in turn, forwarded the survey on to their employees. The employees were instructed to complete the survey within 48 hours and send it back to the EAP consultant via email or manually for review and tabulation. After tallying the confidential results and sending them to each manager directly, the EAP consultant called each leader to ask them about their reaction to the data.

One manager noted with some disappointment, “I always thought I did a good job of communicating with my employees. I really work hard to

keep everyone informed about the big picture and across departments, but apparently, some feel I need to work on that skill. This has been a hard lesson for me – my *perception* of how I do as a leader versus reality.” A relatively new manager was overwhelmed by the support from his employees. “I really didn’t expect to get such glowing feedback,” he shared. Another town manager actually published the survey results in the local newspaper!

“I have always wanted to do something like this, but felt that my employees would be suspicious if I initiated a survey myself. They’d wonder why,” commented one town administrator. “Having the EAP administer the survey and make the results available only to me was what made me say yes to this experiment. It takes a little courage to ask for honest feedback from those you manage, but it’s great for your professional development!” This was the sentiment of the participants in this leadership evaluation experiment.

The ‘Undercover Boss’ Experience

The next step in the process was for each town leader to spend three hours in at least two town departments, working side-by-side with his/her employees. We asked them to keep in mind some questions as they went about their day, such as:

- What is it like to work in this department?

- What is the dynamic among employees in this department? Is there a good sense of teamwork?
- Did you discover any opportunities for growth, change or fresh ideas in this department that you were unaware of before?

Before beginning the “undercover boss” experience each town leader clarified that the purpose of his/her visit was not to critique employees, but rather to gather information and learn about what it is like to work in that department. They did not just observe what was going on, they got their hands dirty!

They came to appreciate the challenges their employees face trying to do more with less, and spoke with pride about the level of skill and dedication they observed in their line employees.

Town leaders also noted significant outcomes from their “undercover boss” experience that would benefit their towns. One town leader found his Collection Department woefully behind the times in their system of recording information. He observed employees using an antiquated spreadsheet that was inaccessible to other departments. With towns needing to become more fiscally transparent, this “undercover boss” will recommend that their recordkeeping system be updated to accommodate sharing of information among departments.

One town administrator who went “undercover” at the town’s Transfer Station (dump) became an advocate for that department. The Select Board had been suggesting that the Transfer Station’s truck could be used in another department. When the administrator

observed firsthand that the truck was absolutely necessary for the smooth operation of the Transfer Station, she was able to go back to the Select Board with authority and recommend that the Transfer Station keep its truck.

The “bosses” were pleased with some “unexpected consequences” from their “undercover” experiences. They found their employees were thrilled that their boss took the time to learn what it is like to work in their department.

Municipal Takeaways

During the seminar, the leaders were asked about their experiences with both the survey and the “undercover boss” exercise. The following

are some ideas and suggestions we gleaned from the municipal leaders who participated in this project. On the *survey*, the town leaders suggested that:

- Other municipal leaders take advantage of this EAP offering and administer the assessment tool to evaluate their leadership skills;
- A comment section is included after each of the five sections to get more clarity on why someone answered a certain way;
- The response timeframe be extended to collect a larger percentage of respondents;

Continued on page 11

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Dunbar's Number

By Marina London, LCSW, CEAP

In all of my presentations about social media, I emphasize that the quality of one's friends, followers, readers, etc. is far more important than the number of visitors. It turns out there is some hard-core science behind my recommendation.

In 1992, before the advent of the Internet, British anthropologist Robin Dunbar hypothesized that there is a cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships. By stable, he meant relationships in which an individual knows who each person is, and how each person relates to every other person. Although Dunbar did not assign a precise value to the number, (it lies between 100 and 230), the commonly used value is 150. Therefore, 150 is referred to as *Dunbar's Number*.

The 1990s came and went and nobody, except social scientists, was paying much attention to Dunbar's work, until...the social media explosion of the 21st century.

Consider these statistics:

- The average Facebook user has 130 friends.
- The typical Twitter user has 126 followers.
- LinkedIn users average around 60 connections.

Statistically speaking, even without realizing it, a majority of users are following Dunbar's advice!

Morgan Refutes Dunbar's Work

However, one social media expert, Jacob Morgan, argues that Dunbar's Number is irrelevant. He explains, "I have around 1,000+ LinkedIn connections, 1,000 Facebook friends, and over

"...the quality of one's friends, followers, readers, etc. is far more important than the number of visitors."

4,300 Twitter followers. Only a tiny portion of these people are strong ties. What social networks have allowed us to do is to build massive networks of weak ties. I use these weak ties all the time to reach out to folks for guest articles, business requests, speaking engagements, or ideas and advice..."

He adds, "We shouldn't be trying to figure out how we can maximize the number of strong relationships we can build or how we

can beat Dunbar's number... Build weak ties where you can because they are extremely valuable, more so than strong ties."

I am not sure I entirely agree with Mr. Morgan. People are constantly asking me questions about social media. Should they have a Facebook? Be on LinkedIn? Do both? To these and other similar queries, I always answer with the question, "What are you going to use it for?" Once you can answer that question, making a useful recommendation is easy.

Let's say you want to use Twitter to be elected to public office, in this case it would make sense to work very hard to get a million weak-tie followers.

However, for most professionals, Dunbar's 150 strong ties will do just fine.

A handful of key colleagues are usually more instrumental in getting referrals, speaking gigs, or even a new job, rather than hundreds of random "friends." ❖

Marina London is Manager of web services for EAPA and author of iWebU, (<http://iwebu.blogspot.com>), a weekly blog about the Internet and social media for mental health and EA professionals who are challenged by new communications technologies. She previously served as an executive for several national EAP and managed mental health care firms. She can be reached at m.london@eapassn.org.

- It be more clearly explained that the information will be used for the leader's professional development; and
- The survey is customized to gather feedback on a leader's particular actions or strategies specific to that town.

On the "undercover boss" part of exercise, town leaders recommended that other municipal leaders:

- Spend time working side-by-side with employees in *each* town department
- Would find "unexpected consequences" of their own from participation in the "undercover boss" exercise. They emphasized that town employees welcomed the opportunity for their boss to spend time with them to learn more about their respective departments.
- Conduct the "undercover boss" exercise *regularly*. Some recommended visiting a different department every month; others thought quarterly or bi-annual visits to departments would be sufficient.

The EAP Takeaway

What is the value of administering a leadership assessment tool and an "undercover boss" experience for the EA professional? Could this be transferable to EAP private sector client organizations?

As an EA professional, I also came away with some "takeaways" from this project with municipal leaders. I found that working closely with these high-level managers to help them assess their leadership skills helped shift my position in their organization from that

of an outside consultant to that of an *inside* consultant. Leaders consistently discussed their leadership strengths and challenges in a deep, meaningful, and personal way. They talked openly, for example, about their own managerial styles, their anxieties and self perceived flaws. I helped normalize their reactions to critiques from their staff and collaborated with them on appropriate strategies for change. Participants now call me more readily for management consultations and about far more complex and organizationally intimate issues than they did previously.

As EA professionals we are constantly looking for fresh ways to be of service to our clientele and add value to our menu of EAP offerings. This experience encouraged me to promote the idea to other private sector clients. In fact, since the completion of the project, a number of other municipal and private sector leaders have expressed interest in participating in this process themselves. Private sector managers recognized that the same principles that applied to leaders involved with a Transfer Station or DPW extended to their work as well.

Initiating the "undercover boss" idea, crafting questions to focus the endeavor and setting a timeframe for its completion gave structure to an idea that many managers wish to try but never find time to actually do. Managers were extremely excited about what they learned from the entire process and they placed great value on it, value that transferred to their feelings about the EAP as a whole. ❖

Jane de Colgyll is an EAP consultant with AllOne Health EAP in Natick, MA.

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Developing a Workplace Suicide Prevention Program

“...for most workplaces, the issue of suicide and suicidal behavior is not yet on the radar.”

| By Sally Spencer-Thomas, Psy.D.

The workplace is the last crucible of sustained human contact for many of the 30,000 people who kill themselves each year in the United States. A co-worker's suicide has a deep, disturbing impact on workmates. For managers, such tragedies pose challenges that no one covered in management school (Shellenbarger, 2001).

While managers often feel responsible for the well-being of the people they supervise, very few have been given any substantial training in how to identify people in a suicide crisis and link those who are struggling to life-saving care. EAPs can play a critical role in closing this gap, not just by addressing the crisis, but also by helping workplaces develop a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention, intervention, and “postvention.”

About every 15 minutes someone dies by suicide, and roughly every minute someone attempts suicide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & Suicide Prevention Resource Center, 2010). Nearly every one of these individuals is currently (or was recently in) the workforce – or is loved by someone who is employed – and yet for most workplaces, the issue of suicide

and suicidal behavior is not yet on the radar.

Suicide among working-age people is a growing problem. A five-year analysis of the nation's death rates released by the CDC found that the suicide rate among 45- to 54-year-olds increased 20% from 1999 to 2004, a larger increase than was found for any other age group during the same period (rates for youth and the elderly are decreasing) (Barber, n.d., Cohen, 2008). The working-age population carries the burden of suicide.

While suicide prevention may seem to be too intensive an endeavor for workplaces to take on, there are many prevention strategies that do not take much effort, but which yield tremendous results. The following are some low-cost, yet high-impact strategies EAPs can use to promote mental health and prevent suicide.

➤ **Promote the suicide prevention lifeline.** One of the best ways to increase capacity for suicide prevention in the workplace is to promote the Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255). This free resource is available to both employees in crisis (and those trying to support them) 24/7. The line connects individuals to local crisis

call centers and is answered by certified volunteers, most of whom have had more training and experience in de-escalating suicidal behavior than many mental health professionals.

➤ **Participate in National Screening Days.** Screening is another effective strategy that EAPs can initiate. Whenever we can identify a health condition early on, we are in a much stronger position to prevent it from escalating. EAPs can help coordinate screening days as a part of a larger national awareness effort. *Mental Health Screening* (MHS) offers workplaces promotional and screening tools for National Depression Screening Day (October), National Eating Disorders Awareness Program (February), National Alcohol Screening Day (April), and National Anxiety Disorders Screening Day (May). In addition, MHS's *Workplace Response*® program gives employees anonymous opportunities to self-screen for depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, and other disorders. These screenings offer immediate results and referrals to an organization's EAP and/or community-based resources following completion of a screening questionnaire.

➤ **Reward mental wellness.** EAPs can help workplaces by providing an incentive to engage in mental wellness. For instance, the *Working Minds* program offers a contest every year to workplaces that have developed mentally healthy policies and practices that demonstrate positive outcomes like retention, lower absenteeism, and higher employee satisfaction. These workplaces then become a model for others. Like any behavioral change, we need to positively reinforce what is working if we want to see the behavior continue or expand.

➤ **Use social marketing.** By showing people who have recovered from significant psychological distress, EAPs can increase a

sense of efficacy among the hopeless. For example, EAPs can develop a multimedia campaign that lets people know they are not alone if they are thinking about suicide – that many resources exist to help. If a company’s leaders are courageous enough to model this message, the culture of the organization usually shifts accordingly.

➤ **Offer educational programs on mental illness.** Employee assistance professionals can provide “lunch-and-learn” sessions that increase awareness about the signs and symptoms of depression, bipolar, alcohol dependence, and other mental illnesses that can lead to suicide. These presentations should show effective treatments,

while refuting misconceptions that can create barriers to care.

➤ **Train staff to become suicide prevention gatekeepers.** Education is necessary, but it’s not enough to create substantial change in the workplace. EAPs should also help workplaces build internal capacity by training key people in suicide prevention methods. The concept is similar to CPR – train lay people to understand the warning signs of a life-threatening situation and how to sustain life until they can link the suicidal person to life-saving care. Many models for this type of training exist, including *Working Minds*, *QPR*, *ASIST*, and others. For more information, visit www.sprc.org.

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Summary

We are increasingly relying on our mental “muscles” to get us through our workday – but just like any other muscle, our mental faculties can become injured or fatigued. This, in turn, can lead to high levels of distress, and even a suicidal crisis. As a result, workplaces need to develop a comprehensive approach to reduce risk of suicide and promote mental resiliency. ❖

Sally Spencer-Thomas is a clinical psychologist, mental health advocate, and survivor of her brother's suicide. She is CEO and co-founder of the Carson J Spencer Foundation and co-author of the Working Minds Toolkit. Working Minds is one of the first programs in the nation to provide workplaces with a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. For more information, visit www.workingminds.org. Sally may be reached at sally@carsonjspencer.org.

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When Suicide or Suicidal Behavior Affects the Workplace

➤ *Suicide death of an employee:* When an employee takes his or her life, co-workers are often significantly affected with a complicated mixture of grief, trauma, guilt, anger and fear. Sometimes these effects can ripple through a workplace and impact those who may have only known the deceased in a casual way.

Because suicide is the “unspeakable death,” most people are not prepared for this type of event, and without planning, many default to practices that make matters worse. Sometimes workplaces choose not to address the death at all and immediately return to “business as usual” without any acknowledgement. Employees who have experienced this type of response often share how it feels as though the life of the deceased was just swept under the carpet, and everyone keeps tripping over the lump.

Usually, there is a collective guilt that festers in the aftermath of a death; the “what ifs,” etc. that remain when we look back at how events unfolded. Often there are veiled threats, warning signs and

even direct indicators that alone may not be concerning, but when pieced together by staff in the aftermath, create a clearer picture of risk.

Employers should not underestimate the impact of a suicide event. Vulnerable employees who over-identify with the deceased person may become more at risk for suicidal behavior themselves. Practical assistance for those *most directly affected* is often very helpful in the immediate aftermath of a *suicide*. In addition, debriefing that focuses on what to expect and what resources are available can help employees *most distressed* by the death. (Those in closest proximity to the deceased – by relation or geography – may or may not be the most distressed.)

➤ *Suicide death of a family member of an employee:* Like the suicide death of an employee, co-workers often find themselves walking on eggshells after a colleague’s family member has died by suicide. EAPs can help workplaces honor the life of the person without glamorizing or romanticizing the death. Rather than avoid dealing with this form of death,

workplaces should treat a death by suicide as they do other types of death that impact their staff. If it is the culture of the workplace to send cards and flowers for other types of death, then cards and flowers should be sent to the grieving family bereaved by suicide.

➤ *Suicide attempt of an employee:* When people attempt suicide, their lives are often turned upside down, medically and emotionally. When a workplace is sensitive to their return-to-work needs, the transition supports their recovery, rather than adding to the distress. People learn how to get back on their feet, and, by empowering them to be part of the reintegration plan, workplaces demonstrate respect that builds trust. EAPs can help with this reintegration process by asking workplaces how they handle transitions for other people who have experienced life-threatening health conditions. Simply asking the returning employee what support they need, and what level of confidentiality they desire, is often a good place to start. ❖

— Sally Spencer-Thomas

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newsbriefs

A Tech Trend You Can't Ignore

Technology is evolving... fast. For that reason, it's imperative that your EAP and corporate clients are focusing not just on the changes that are happening today, but also on the technological trends that are emerging, according to Daniel Burrus, considered one of the world's leading technology forecasts and business strategists.

One such emerging trend, Burrus says, is cloud-based technology, which will enable people to use their laptops, cell phones, and tablet computers as a tool to receive training precisely when they need it. In the current training model used by many

organizations, people receive training for a variety of areas before they actually need the expertise, thus taking the people away from their jobs and costing the company a lot of money.

But with just-in-time training, companies can keep people in the field without the specific training. Then, when the person needs a certain skill set to complete a job or perform a certain task, he or she can receive the training for it in real time via cloud-based technology.

"It's different and better than a standard tutorial, because the training can be accessed via any device, anywhere, and at anytime," Burrus says.

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Here is a listing of content new to the EAPA Learning Center this year:

http://www.softconference.com/eapa		
2011 Annual World EAP Conference On Demand	Presenter(s)	PDH Approval
Opening Keynote - Building a Workplace Culture of Health: Mapping the EA Path	John Dillon Riley, Ph.D., Manager, Wellness Resources, Chevron Corporation	1 PDH, Domain II
Empowering EAPs at the Organizational Level: Using A Comprehensive Assessment Tool	Radhi Vandayar; Joel Bennett, Ph.D. Shantel Smit, Ph.D.	1.5 PDHs, Domain I
Treatment of Substance-Dependent Employees: A Two-Year Seamless Holistic Continuum of Care Model	Guttorm Toverud, Ph.D. Kari Croucher, NIP/IGA	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
Wellness and EAP: The Mountain Top or the Avalanche?	Robert Mines, Ph.D.; Peggy Hill Britney Kirsch	1.5 PDHs, Domain I
Recovery 2.0: Effective Use of Interactive Technology, Substance Abuse Treatment	Emil Chiauzzi, Ph.D.	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
Suicide Risk: Assessment and Intervention with Focus on Returning Military	Jon Richard, Ph.D.	2 PDHs, Domain II, III
Ethical Practice at Light-Speed: Online Direct Services to Individual EAP Clients	EAPA's Ethics Education Panel	2 PDHs, Domain I
Cross-Site Findings from the Young Adults, the Workplace Initiative	Deborah M. Galvin, Ph.D.; Georgia Karuntzos; Jeremy Bray	2 PDHs, Domain II, III
But Why? Attribution of Meaning and Its Role, Resiliency After Tragedy	Bob VandePol, MSW	2 PDHs, Domain II, III
World Update: China	Moderator Wolfgang Seidl, M.D.	2 PDHs, Domain I, II
Orchestrating Balance, a Time of Chaos	Carol Kerr, M.Ed., CEAP	1.5 PDHs, Domain II, III
Online Innovations for a New Generation of Clients	DeeAnna Nagel, LPC, DCC Lyle Labardee, LPC, DCC	1.5 PDHs, Domain I, II
He's My Son and I Don't Want to Lose Him: How Your EAP Can Help	James O'Hair; Patrick Connell; Richard Louis	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
Understanding Work-related Issues and Treatment Considerations of Corrections Workers	Caterina Spinaris, Ph.D., LPC	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
Role of EAP Services, Health and Wellness	Hyong Un, M.D.	1.5 PDHs, Domain II, III
Keynote - Threats of Violence, the Workplace: EAP Consultation Guidelines	Bruce Blythe, Owner, Chairman, Crisis Care Network; Terri Stivarius, J.D.	1 PDH, Domain II, III
Shiftworkers in India: EAP Response to the 24/7 Workforce	Karuna Baskar, MA	1.5 PDHs, Domain II, III
Supporting Employment Success for Veterans and Other Employees with Disabilities	Lisa Stern, M.A.; Elena Carr, M.A.	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
SBIRT, EA Practice: Lessons Learned Along the Trail	Melissa Richmond, Ph.D. Randi Wood, LCSW	1.5 PDHs, Domain II, III

EAPA LEARNING CENTER OFFERINGS

2011 Annual World EAP Conference On Demand	Presenter(s)	PDH Approval
"If I lose this job, life isn't worth living:" Crisis Response for Suicide Behavior	Judy Beahan, MSW Sally Spencer-Thomas, Psy.D. Bob VandePol, MSW	1.5 PDHs, Domain II
Creating a Culture of Health: The Role of EAP	John Burke, M.A.; Richard Paul, MSW	1.5 PDHs, Domain II
Helping the EA Professional Address Cybersex: Definition, Assessment, and Treatment.	Weston Edwards, Ph.D., LP	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
Screening and Brief Intervention: Utilizing EA to Address Risky Substance Use	Brie Reimann, MPA Leigh Fischer, MPH	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
EAP in China: Not So Foreign After All	Paul Yin	1.5 PDHs, Domain I
Top 10 Web Secrets for the Next Decade: What Every Professional Should Know	Marina London, LCSW	1.5 PDHs, Domain I
A Tailored Fit: Best Practices for Critical Incident Response to Banks	Joseph Utecht, LPC, CEAP Jeff Gorter, MSW	1.5 PDHs, Domain II
Responding to Responders: Research-informed Best Practices for EAPs Serving Firefighters	Richard Gist, Ph.D. Tonya Slawinski, Ph.D., LCSW	1 PDH, Domain II
Killer Bosses: Leadership Development as a Strategic Wellness Initiative	Kenneth Nowack	1 PDH, Domain II
Nutrition and Mental Health: How What We Eat Affects How We Feel	Tristin Mead-Rodrigues, LPC, CEAP	1 PDH, Domain III
Using Cutting Edge Technology to Expand the EAP's Role for Generations to Come	Kristine Van Hoof-Haines, M.A.	1 PDH, Domain I
The Well-Being, EAP, Workforce Engagement Connection: Lighting Up Business Results	Gidget Peddie Julius Schillinger, MS, Ph.D.	1 PDH, Domain I, II
Research Roundtable: "Organizational Wellness and Engagement"	Joel Bennett, Ph.D.; Tom Amaral, Ph.D.; Chester Taranowski, Ph.D.	1.5 PDHs, Domain I, II
Collaborative Response to Traumas Affecting Dispersed Employees and Workplaces	EAPA's Workplace Disaster Panel	1.5 PDHs, Domain II
Empowering Employers to Create Recovery-Friendly Cultures	Barbara K Ohme, SPHR; Mary Hitzemann, SPHR	1.5 PDHs, Domain II, III
Expats and Political Persecution	Eduardo Lambardi, LCP; Jenny Espinoza, LCP	1.5 PDHs, Domain I, II
Positive Psychology: Best Practices for Therapists and the Organization	Alexis Karris, Ph.D.	1.5 PDHs, Domain III
The Transition of Military Reservists from Combat Zone to Civilian Workplace	Lisa Corbett, LCSW, CEAP Patrick Williams, LMFT, CEAP	1 PDH, Domain III
Dissertation Forum: "Resilience, Organizational Wellbeing and ROI"	Gary DeFraia, Ph.D. Anne Hammond	1 PDH, Domain I, II
Meditation: An Evidence-Based Approach to Health and Productivity Management	John Revolinski, M.P.A.	1 PDH, Domain III
Do Interactive Online Screening Tools Reinforce Your EA Services?	Dirk Antonissen	1 PDH, Domain III
Giving Excellent EAP Service to Divorcing Employees While Reducing Employers' Costs	Rebecca Murphy, JD; Amy Wirtz, JD; Karen Tornoff; Martina Moore	1 PDH, Domain III
Mental Health First Aid: Evidence-Based Prevention and Early Intervention for EAPs	Mary Cimini, MA, MSW Bryan Gibb, MBA	1 PDH, Domain III
That Was Then, This is Now: Personal and Professional Reflections on Deployment	Andy Wihongi, LPN Lynn Jarreau-Wihongi, LCSW	1 PDH, Domain III
Take Your EAP to a New Level: Marketing Your Organization	Shelley Plemons, M.S.	1 PDH Domain 1
Supporting Workplace Civility: EAP's Role and Responsibility	Debra Messer, MA, CEAP	1 PDH, Domain II

EAPA LEARNING CENTER OFFERINGS

2011 Annual World EAP Conference On Demand	Presenter(s)	PDH Approval
Ethical Considerations and Cultural Sensitivity as a SAP	Robert Chaplin, MA; Jon Crook, Ph.D.	1 PDH, Domain I, II
The Power of Partnership: A Coordinated Response to the Gulf Oil Spill	Susan Baker, MSW, CEAP; Robert Intveld; Chris Kvasnica; Jeff Gorter, MSW	2 PDHs, Domain II
Research on Return-on-Investment: Which EAP Models Are Generating the Greatest ROI?	Tom Amaral, Ph.D.	2 PDHs, Domain I
Crucial Issue Forum - Every EAP Purchaser's Dream: Evidence-Based SBIRT Value	Eric Goplerud, Ph.D. Tracy McPherson, Ph.D.	1.5 PDHs, Domain II
http://www.softconference.com/eapa		
Alcohol Screening Brief Intervention (SBIRT) Training	Presenter(s)	PDH Approval
The EAP and Behavioral Health Professional's Guide to Screening, Brief Intervention and Treatment	Tracy McPherson, Ph.D.; Cynthia Moreno-Tuohy; Jan Price, LCSW, CEAP; Eric Goplerud, Ph.D.	6.5 PDHs, Domain II, III
http://www.eapassn.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=968		
SBIRT Webinar Series	Presenter(s)	PDH Approval
SBIRT: Referring to Mutual Support Groups	Shari Allwood	1 PDH Domain III
EAP, SBIRT, and DOT-Covered Employees	Tamara Cagney, Ed.D.	1 PDH Domain II
Working with Family Members	Laura Dashner, LCSW	1 PDH Domain III
SBIRT and Older Adults	Sis Wenger	1 PDH Domain III
SBIRT: Working with Physicians in Ongoing Care Coordination	Lynn Guelzow Josh Dichkewich	1 PDH Domain III
SBIRT- Working with Addiction Treatment Programs in Ongoing Care Coordination	Larry Westreich, M.D. Marc Fishman, M.D.	1 PDH Domain III
Employees and their Family Members	Timothy Sheehan, Ph.D.	1 PDH Domain III
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Online Courses (Live)	Presenter(s)	PDH Approval
Elevating Ethical Awareness	Ethics Education Panel	2 PDH Domain I
Online CEAP Exam Prep Course	Prep Course Development Team	6 PDHs Domain I, II, III
Ethical Practice at Light Speed	Ethics Education Panel	2 PDH Domain I
http://www.eapassn.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1034		
Webinar Archive	Presenter(s)	PDH Approval
Accountable Care Organizations: Opportunities and Challenges for Employee Assistance	Dave Worster, LICSW, CEAP	1 PDH, Domain I
How To Integrate Employee Assistance Into Business Continuity Planning	Gerald Lewis, PhD	1 PDH, Domain I
Linking, Tweeting & Blogging: Social Media Tools for the EA Professional	Kelly Gallagher, CEAP	1 PDH, Domain I
Managing Complex Supervisory Referrals: Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations	David Fisher, PhD	1 PDH, Domain II
Managing Psychiatric Disability in the Workplace: A Corporate Example of an Integrated Case Management Program	John C. Pompe, Psy. D., SPHR; Monica Ratcliff, LCSW, PHR	1 PDH, Domain II
Seeking Civility: Understanding & Eradicating Bullying @ Work	Catherine M. Mattice	1 PDH, Domain II
Working with Organizational Leaders: Coaching Essentials	Mickey Parsons, M.Ed., MCC, CEAP	1 PDH, Domain I, II



Business Structures in Private Practice – Part II

Part one of this article (see the Volume 41, No. 4 issue of the JEA), discussed the different types of liability, as well as sole proprietorship. This article will examine partnerships, limited partnerships, corporations, and limited liability companies (LLCs).

By Sandra G. Nye, J.D., MSW

Partnerships consist of relationships between two or more persons embodied in an agreement that establishes rights and duties among the partners and regulates their conduct as they transact business. There are few legal requirements to creating a partnership. Unless otherwise agreed upon by contract, partners may pool their resources and talents and share control and

management of the partnership. The duration of the partnership and transfer of ownership shares is determined by agreement of the partners or on occurrence of certain events identified by state law.

Under a general partnership, assets of each individual are vulnerable to business liabilities regardless of which partner incurred the liability. The partners have unlimited personal liability for their own

actions, and also for the actions of each other. Therefore, a written partnership agreement that establishes the responsibilities of the partner (to each other) is extremely important. It is strongly recommended that this agreement be prepared by an attorney who represents all of the prospective partners – and also someone who does *not* have any loyalty or interest in any individual or group of potential partners.

Continued on page 30

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The State of EAP

Observations from the Trenches

“More tangible results are what wins accounts, not low price or inflated utilization numbers. What matters most is rigorous evidence on what you and the client agree upon as great results...”

| By David A. Sharar, Ph.D., Tom Bjornson & Alex Mackenzie, MFT, CEAP

This article is intended to provide a glimpse of what is going on in the field of EAP as we embark upon a new year. First, the bad news: our field is currently in peril for two reasons: 1) slowness in demonstrating how EAP adds value to the organizations we serve; and 2) the flawed process through which EAP services are contracted. Now, the good news: as a field we are in a position to address both of these problems.

➤ **Even the best information available about the EAP industry has significant limitations.** With a few exceptions (most notably *Open Minds* and Dr. Tom Amaral), there is little data regarding characteristics and basic metrics. We lack operational definitions for the terms we use: What is a “true” annualized utilization rate? What percentage of EAP cases are work/life or financial/legal versus short-term counseling? What percentage of cases are by phone or online versus face-to-face counseling with a clinician? What is the average number of sessions in a typical EAP case? These and other questions will hopefully be addressed by the national “Benchmarking in EAP” study that is underway by Dr.

Stan Granberry with the National Behavioral Consortium and sponsored by the Employee Assistance Research Foundation.

According to *Open Minds’* 2011 Market Industry Report, the ten largest firms control about 78% of the EAP market. Not much has changed since *Open Minds’* previous report in 2002, which indicated that the top six firms covered roughly 70% of the cumulative share.

The 2011 report noted a remarkable increase in so-called integrated models, meaning EAPs are now routinely bundled with Work-Life or Managed Behavioral Health as a one-stop shop program for purchasers. EAP only enrollment stood at 55.1 million; down 12.3%. Meanwhile, integrated programs jumped 285% from roughly 80.2 million in 2002 to 309 million in 2011. This number, however, lacks validity, as there are only about 309 million people in the U.S.

➤ **Acting like a successful business: strategy and innovation** – In terms of a business product life cycle, it’s time for service innovation in the EAP field. But innovation doesn’t have to mean ripping out the core, as many businesses in the mature life cycle do,

but it can mean *redefining, adding or integrating* features, and *repackaging*. Many EAP firms are working on just these sorts of strategies. Beyond bundling with Work/Life and Managed Behavioral Health Care, providers are developing proprietary breakthrough (but easily copied) products that complement or are attached to an EAP.

Some of these new EAP-type products seem akin to the past housing boom’s financial inventions, like floating rates, reverse amortization, and sub-prime loans. In their own way, some EA firms are like mortgage banks were in the day, slicing up EA services and gluing them back together into new, re-structured, integrated products such as Life Coaching, Life Management, and so on.

From a market perspective, Dr. Tom Amaral of EAP Technology Systems attempted to define the different segments and numbers of EA providers by analyzing data from his firm’s proprietary warehouse. Although Amaral has not yet published his findings, he presented the “Seven Market Segments of the EAP Industry” at the World EAP Conference in Tampa in 2010. These estimates appear to be the best effort to date to define the total number of

EAPs by market segment. (See the accompanying Table 1 on page 22.)

Amaral conservatively estimates a minimum of 1,600 providers of EA services in the U.S. – 900 more than *Open Minds* identified in their recent report. One conclusion that could be drawn is that little is really known about the state of contemporary EAP in the U.S. The apparent growth in EAP has not been accompanied by a rigorous examination of the similarities and differences of the various vendors and models.

Perhaps another conclusion we can draw from *Open Minds* and Amaral's work is that the vast majority of American workers have access to an EAP (or EAP-like service), and the field is saturated with a variety of EA providers. The goal for many of them is to gain more market share by capturing more covered employees already covered by a different provider – competing fiercely to have the total employee pie re-distributed.

➤ **If the status quo remains...**

It seems safe to infer that even with uncertain numbers, EAP is fundamentally changing and is likely dissipating as a specialized field or a stand-alone program. But there is a more fundamental issue – the field's reluctance to demonstrate its value concretely and quantitatively, leading to our ultimate demise if we don't break out of our price-driven box.

As a field we haven't figured out how to differentiate on the basis of real performance – or how to find purchasers who are willing to pay fair prices for true value. We simply do not operate

in a rational capital market that channels higher rates to those who most significantly deliver results. Ironically, the profession whose stock and trade involves listening has not done a good job of listening to our constituents about what is important to them, so that we may deliver it. Instead we've believed the worst – that what they care about most is price.

➤ **The new breed: differentiating and developing based on analytics and outcomes** – The trend toward EAP as a commodity is partly our own fault. In general the development and use of solid outcome measures and analytics

costs. The key was to document and precisely quantify their activities and outcomes, which led to tangible value appreciated by the purchaser. This type of supporting data leads to a more real, enduring partnership with the purchaser about sustaining rates – or at least a discussion about why a cheaper or free EA service actually causes the client organization to *lose* value.

Every EA firm calculates simple descriptive statistics about client demographics, utilization, and program activities. However, this new breed is moving beyond simple calculations as their primary form of reporting. They are also doing things like measuring

“As a field, we haven't figured out how to differentiate on the basis of real performance – or how to find purchasers who are willing to pay fair prices for true value.”

in our field has progressed far too slowly. However, a few EA firms have quietly shifted the battle and relied on their strengths – delivering highly responsive, results-oriented services and then *communicating to the purchaser the added value being delivered*.

How did they do it? They aligned value and price and thoughtfully communicated the value being provided. They created a system for reliably gathering and analyzing data for each component of their EA service and the impact of results on key business drivers such as productivity and containing health care

the workplace effects of EA intervention using credible before/after measurement designs and pooling EA data with data from employers and external vendors, such as absenteeism records, health risk assessments, and others. In other words, they are differentiating themselves by harnessing better data and using statistical processing to help purchasers get real facts. More tangible results are what wins accounts, not low price or inflated utilization numbers. What matters most is rigorous *evidence* on what you *and* the client agree upon as great results – be it

improved work performance, less presenteeism or absenteeism, etc.

The price-competitive environment in EAP – to be blunt – does not reward and retain the best providers, nor does it maximize the value provided to business. Strategically speaking, the key is to simultaneously sort out early adopter purchasers by understanding how to distinguish valuable service from those who just want a “commodity” at the lowest price possible.

➤ **Shifting focus: a mission for success** – Every EA firm needs to make money, but making money isn’t our mission, but rather

an outgrowth of being the best we can be at what we do. The critical question for EAP providers is not, How much money do we make once expenses are subtracted from revenues? Rather, the question is How effectively can the organization make an impact, or obtain results that matter *to the client organization*? The time has come to put at least as much energy into measuring workplace outcomes as we do in measuring our financial status. Performance should be assessed relative to our purpose.

In his *Business Week* best seller, “Good to Great”, author and researcher Jim Collins indicates that in business, money is both

an *input* (a resource to achieve results), and an *output* (a measure of success). In organizations with health or social purposes (including for-profits), money is primarily an input and not a measure of greatness. The urgent goal, as a field, is to hold ourselves as accountable for improved progress in *outputs* (e.g. improved work performance) as we do in finding ways to make money with capitation rates as low as \$11.00 PEPY (Per Employee Per Year). The latter should no longer be viewed as a successful *output*.

➤ **The broken procurement process** – Consider the companies that offer a “gratis” EA or Work-

Table 1

No. of Employee Assistance Programs in Each Market Segment

Market Segment	Number in Segment	Provide Internal Services	Provide External Services
Fortune 1000 EAPs	150-250	150-250	-
Government EAPs	250-360	250-350	10-20
University EAPs	175-250	175-250	10-20
National EAP Vendors	30-40	-	30-40
Local/Regional EAPs	400-600	-	400-600
Health Care EAPs	500-750	450-700	375-600
Union Programs	100-250	100-250	100-250
Total	1605-2490	1125-1800	925-1530

Amaral, T. (2010). The seven market segments of EAP. Presentation at the EAPA 2010 Annual World Conference, October 7. Tampa.

Life service with the purchase of a higher margin insurance product – when of course the EA services are not really free but buried in other charges. What these companies do to the field is muddy the true cost-benefit equation and make it more difficult for purchasers to determine the true value of an EA service. When something is free for any length of time, the perceived value gradually erodes. Put another way, if something used to cost money and now does not, buyers logically tend to correlate that with a decline in quality or value. Inevitably that perception becomes reality as suppliers water down products and services in order to survive. Ultimately client organizations come to feel entitled to receiving EAP services for free.

In addition, the procurement process itself is broken. Many EA firms regularly slog through a Request for Proposal (RFP), a hodge-podge of previously used RFPs that are long on rhetoric, but short on separating mediocre from superior providers. These RFPs are full of mandatory fill-in-the-blank questions about areas unrelated to actual performance or quality. Many EA firms discover their proposal is just one of many that allows the purchaser to satisfy internal bidding requirements, or worse, the unsuspecting bidder is part of an intelligence gathering exercise and squandered their resources for a change in vendor that never materialized. In other words, competitive bids are often used to drive down the existing vendor's price, when there was never any intent of changing vendors. The RFP process was merely a way to keep the current vendor in line or to bag a new

idea. Consultants, brokers, and even employers will admit that many RFP responses are not that helpful in determining where purchasers get the best value for their money.

Summary

While we are known for listening, we must apply that skill to market research to discover our purchasers' needs and values so we can deliver them. For our field to be sustainable, we must define our mission in service-oriented terms, and demonstrate how we deliver measurable results. The value proposition that got us started – that a win-win exists between individual and organizational health and productivity – is still valid, but we must be more innovative in order to respond to the increasingly dynamic business environment of our corporate clients.

To avoid being devalued to the point where there is no viable EAP business, we need to stop treating ourselves, our services, and our clients as commodities. Only by using these basic business approaches and seeing our client relationships as partnerships – rather than vendor-customer transaction-based businesses – can we break out of this cycle. ❖

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Future Trends in EAP

Highlights From an Industry Survey

“...the organizations we work with are eager for services that are more proactive and preventative (addressing the entire population) and also more strategic in nature...”

| By Mark Attridge, Ph.D., M.A. & John Burke, M.A.

In the fall of 2011, the authors of this article conducted a survey to examine trends in the services and strategies offered by employee assistance programs (EAPs). This article features some of the key findings from this research, which was presented at the National Behavioral Consortium. For more details about this study, see the *EASNA Research Note* (October 2011, Volume 2, Number 3), available at www.easna.org/publications-research-notes.

About the Study

Survey data was collected via a secure website from 150 EA professionals in the U.S. and Canada. Most were in senior management or clinical leadership roles. Respondents were associated with the EAP field in a variety of roles, including working for external vendors of EA services (51%); working for internal programs (23%); an individual provider of clinical services (11%); consultant or academic (5%); or “other” (9%). The following seven services were included:

- Counseling with assessment, brief clinical support, and referral;
- Management consultations and organizational support;

- Critical incident response;
- Integration of EAP with work/life and wellness;
- High-risk case finding and long-term case management;
- Support for employees on STD/LTD disability leave; and
- Technology and web-enabled services.

These services were rated on three issues: (a) estimated frequency of use by organizational clients; (b) importance in defining EAP; and (c) business value. The potential for providing more strategic consulting by EAPs at the organizational level was also examined with a qualitative question.

Part I – A Profile of EA Services

The findings for each question for the seven services (listed above) are presented in Table 1 on page 25. Results of various statistical factor analyses of this data consistently revealed three general clusters of different types of EAP services: 1) Core EAP services; 2) “Pareto” EAP services; and 3) Connecting EAP services. Each cluster is described in greater detail below.

➤ *Cluster 1: EAP Core Capabilities – “The Big 3.”* This

set includes counseling and referral for individual employees, manager consultations and organizational support, and critical incident response. These three services had the highest ratings of importance in defining EAP (average of 84% of the sample rating it of high importance). Each of these services also has a proud history as a key component of the original core technology of EAP. Brief counseling and referral for individual employees was characterized by high use and stable business value. Management consultations and support to organizations was characterized by mostly moderate use and stable to rising business value. Critical incident response was characterized by mostly moderate use and rated as stable to rising in business value.

➤ *Cluster 2: “Pareto” Cases with High-Touch EAP Services.* This set of services includes using the EAP to find and support individuals who need behavioral health expertise for high-risk mental health and addiction conditions and for those who need assistance with return to work for disability due to mental health and addiction issues. These are called “pareto” services in reference to

the economic concept in which a small segment of a population is associated with a large share of an outcome of interest. (In this instance, the few cases at a company that create a large part of annual health care expenses and work performance losses.) Both of these services were rated of less importance to defining EAP than all of the “Big Three” services. Using the EAP for high-risk case management for employees with mental health and addiction problems had mostly low use and a mixed

trend as far as business value. Supporting disability claim cases for employees with mental health or addiction problems had mostly low use and stable to rising business value.

➤ *Cluster 3: Connecting Cases with High-Tech EAP Services.*

This set involves services that use the Internet and other new technologies, along with the integration of the EAP with wellness and work/life programs – the idea being to connect individuals to self-care resources, prevention

services, and other health services and company benefits. Both of these services were also rated relatively lower in importance to defining EAP than the “Big Three” core services. Technology and web-enabled services for EAP was characterized by low to moderate use. Integration of EAP with wellness and work/life had a mixed level of use. However, technology and integration of services represent two growth areas for EAP business development as both were the highest rated for rising in business value.

Outcome Measure			
Service Type	Estimated Level of Use ^a	Importance to Defining EAP ^b	Business Value Trend ^c
<i>Sample Size:</i>	118	147	147
<i>Rating:</i>	NO - L - M - H	L - M - H	F - S - R
Core EAP			
Counseling	01 - 01 - 25 - 73	01 - 08 - 91	18 - 61-21
Consultations	01 - 12 - 51 - 36	04 - 12 - 84	24 - 39 - 37
Crisis	01 - 15 - 49 - 35	01 - 21 - 78	09 - 47 - 44
Pareto EAP			
MH/SA Cases	08 - 40 - 30 - 22	16 - 37 - 47	31 - 39 - 30
Disability	13 - 43 - 28 - 16	13 - 39 - 48	24 - 39 - 37
Connecting EAP			
Technology	04 - 38 - 39 - 19	13 - 47 - 40	12 - 21 - 68
Integration	04 - 23 - 37 - 36	05 - 41 - 54	12 - 28 - 60

Note: Numbers in the table are the percentage of the relevant total sample for each outcome measure. The figures in the rows for each service type within each column add up to 100%.

^aNO = Not offered; L = Low use; M = Medium use; H = High use.

^bL = Low importance; M = Moderate importance; H = High importance.

^cF = Fading value; S = Stable value; R = Rising value.

Part 1: A Service Life Cycle Interpretation

Together these findings define three primary but distinctly different areas of focus for providing EA services. As we reflected on the findings, the link between the areas of focus and the well-studied concept of product life cycle or service life cycle became apparent. (For the purposes of this article, the term “service life cycle” will be used.) Service life cycle has four predictable phases that includes: *introduction*, *growth*, *maturation*, and *decline*. A newly defined service, embraced by the marketplace, will go from introduction to decline if the service is not continually enhanced and re-engineered to meet the changing needs of the purchaser.

The “Big 3” services represent core functions of an EAP that have, over the years, been deemed valuable and necessary by the marketplace. These functions will no doubt continue to define the field. At the same time, it is critical to retool and increase the level of sophistication of these functions in order to maintain their value and viability. The current marketplace price sensitivity around these functions suggests the “Big 3” is moving into the “decline phase” of the service life cycle.

The second cluster of “pareto” services has evolved over time as the EAP field has grown and matured. Managing high-risk and disability cases has been identified as an area of need and opportunity. Even though the utilization of these kinds of services presently is low, with a well-designed busi-

ness model the potential for higher use and future growth as a product area certainly exists.

Finally, the third cluster, which addresses integration and the use of technology, provides a significant opportunity for EAP to continue to grow and mature. This service cluster underscores how EAPs must partner and integrate more closely with a range of workplace functions including wellness and work/life, and not operate in a vacuum. Technology opens the door for creativity, problem-solving solutions and the ability to better engage the workplace (especially younger workers) through EAP capabilities such as online resources, social media, mobile wireless technology, and gaming. Done right, the increasing use of these kinds of services can prevent the decline phase of the service life cycle for the overall EAP product by adding something that is innovative and in high demand from purchasers.

Part 2 – The Proactive EAP

While acknowledging the need to continue to provide EAP core services and to expand both the “pareto” and connecting kinds of EAP specialty services, our experience as consultants working with large employers and health care systems has also led us to see the value in leveraging the skill of an EAP to be more strategic in addressing workplace needs.

We see great opportunity in moving beyond the pre-defined programs and services commonly offered today as these are primarily reactive in terms of being delivered

as an on-demand response to the problems of individual employees, or to support certain workplace events (and typically only serving 5% to 10% of a population). In contrast, the organizations we work with are eager for services that are more proactive and preventative (addressing the entire population) and also more strategic in nature and that can help them address more complex issues at the organizational level. The issues at the top of their wish list include how to foster greater employee engagement and productivity, how to retain talent and develop their executives, how to comprehensively support employees with high-risk complex health conditions, and how to create a culture of emotional wellness as part of an overall workplace health strategy.

To confirm this view, on the survey we asked the following open-ended item: *Given your knowledge of the marketplace, can the value of an EAP be enhanced by also offering services that provide more of a strategic, proactive, and consultative approach to the organization?*

The results found that 91% of the sample responded favorably to this question. This high level of endorsement supported our vision as so many people also recognized the opportunity for EAP to become more proactive and strategic in focus. Many respondents lamented the limitations of the current “reactive” model of EAP practices and felt that it needs to be re-engineered. Others noted how EAPs should take advantage of their positive reputation as experts in

handling psychological and behavioral issues in the workplace.

Yet another theme of the responses to this question was that EAPs remain too isolated and they need to integrate more deeply with wellness and other workplace-sponsored employee and family support programs – so that assessments and referrals can be done more rapidly and systematically via shared technological tools and data systems, and by regular interaction between staff in different programs.

Roughly one in four of all respondents – although still positive in general – expressed some reservations about making this proactive business shift a reality for their EAP. Reasons for this skepticism including saying that it was too hard to sell, too costly to make the needed changes operationally, and that it was too difficult to deliver as it required organizational consulting skills beyond the capacity of most of their clinically-oriented EAP staff.

Conclusions and Future Directions – The Core and More

We believe the results of this study have significant implications for the EAP field. This research reveals strong agreement among EA professionals, albeit with some reservations, that the opportunity exists for EAPs to play a more proactive and consultative role in the workplaces they serve. To their credit, some well-established internal model EAPs are already successfully consulting with organizations, and there are some external EAP companies that are rethinking their approach to be more strategic

and consultative – and as a result are winning new customers. But these examples are few and far between. Having a proactive focus needs to become more of an industry-wide movement to shift how EAPs are perceived and provided.

The need to reposition EAP, although widely recognized and often discussed openly at industry

Many respondents lamented the limitations of the current “reactive” model of EAP practices and felt that it needs to be re-engineered.

meetings, is largely held dormant by a reluctance of most EAPs to move in this direction. Why? Perhaps because of a fear of the risks associated with change. Perhaps it is the fear of the unknown. Even as the industry voices its frustration with price stagnation, commoditization issues and perceptions of eroding value, it seems to have a paralysis when it comes to rethinking and re-engineering the basic delivery model. And yet, as the service life cycle model would predict, this is just what is necessary in times like this when the basic set of EAP services is a mature product facing decline in its established markets.

Therefore, we suggest that is time for the industry to get out of the box in which it has placed itself; one of being seen as focusing

mostly on providing inexpensive counseling, occasional consultation with managers, and crisis support when needed. One way to address this problem is to restore the core by improving the *quality* of what is delivered, the *efficiency* of how it is delivered, and the *relevance* of how it affects *outcomes* that are important to the purchaser.

But this strategy alone may not be enough. EAP can and should be much more. The “pareto” high-touch and the connecting high-tech kinds of services are two areas to also invest in, as they both have high potential for business growth and are already in the skill set of many EAPs. Others who are more daring can go even further to re-invent their business model to become more proactive and consultative. They can strive to find new ways to contribute to building cultures of health and emotional well-being at their client organizations.

Going in these directions as an industry is how you beat the service life cycle trap. How many of the leaders of EAPs reading this article will have the courage to seize the opportunity and take the risk to reposition their business? Will you? ♦

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Commentary on the State of EAP & Future Trends in EAP

The Communications Advisory Panel of the *JEA* invited EAP leaders to comment on the two preceding articles: “The State of EAP: Observations from the Trenches” by David Sharar, Tom Bjornson, and Alex Mackenzie and “Future Trends in EAP: Highlights from an Industry Survey” by Mark Attridge and John Burke. A diverse range of industry and national perspectives are represented among this group of commentators, including: Internal EA programs from the corporate (Turner) and higher education (Prevatt) sectors in the United States, External EA providers from Canada (Thompson) and the United States (Dyme) and EA consultants from the United Kingdom (Hopkins) and the United States (Cohen). Select quotes from their comments are presented in this article.

Richard Hopkins, MA, Lead Consultant, Plaudex Integrated Health Management Consultants (London, England) & Founder and Honorary President of the Employee Assistance European Forum (EAEF)

“Both articles provide much needed updates on the current state of the EA market from a supplier’s point of view. There are some excellent pointers for development opportunities,

such as closer integrating with related services, embracing new technology to reach more of the workforce and providing a wider range of strategic consultancy services. The key issue, however, is not what is in our self-determined ‘bag of goodies’ but rather what our customers really want. As alluded to by Sharar, Bjornson, and Mackenzie, we have not done ‘a good job of listening’ to our customers. Partnering with our customers to determine their real needs and then meeting them will turn out to be far more rewarding, in all sorts of ways, than remaining in our current narrow world of low value diffidence.”

Bernard Dyme, LCSW, CEAP, President & CEO, Perspectives, Ltd. (Chicago, Illinois)

“Finally the EAP field is looking at the issue of selling value in a mature market. Sharar, Bjornson and Mackenzie talk about two elements that are critical in re-branding EAPs. First, we need to ask and listen to what our purchasers want and second, we need to position ourselves as solution providers who bring value and can measure and demonstrate that value. We need to stop whining about the commoditization of the field and start selling the distinguishing

elements of what we do provide. Indeed, as found in the study by Attridge and Burke, we could be more proactive and assert our role in prevention, emphasize our consultative expertise and develop a more high-tech EAP. But to follow these trends, the field must first realize that the cost of not changing is much higher than the cost of changing.”

Bruce Prevatt, Ph.D., Director (Retired), Florida State University Office of Employee Assistance Services & Visiting Faculty, Department of School Psychology and Learning Systems (Tallahassee, Florida)

“These articles are refreshing in many ways. They invite us to step away from the prevailing mental health-oriented model of EA and revisit the non-clinical aspects of what we do that makes EAP a distinct service that is dedicated to enhancing the quality of the work environment. If we are not willing to critically evaluate our scope of services and pricing strategies, we will likely have only ourselves to blame for our own demise. But by embracing the key messages found in these articles, we can provide a broader set of services without losing the basics of the EAP core technology.”

Craig Thompson, MEd, MBA,
CEO of Homewood Human
Solutions (Vancouver, British
Columbia, Canada)

“What other industry knows less about its composition and make-up and yet has seen success? And what does this portend for an industry that wants to transform and continue to grow? I agree with these observations from the first article and with the ‘service life cycle’ interpretive framework applied to the study results in the second article. As an industry, we do need to retool and re-engineer our services and to be more responsive to customer desires and market trends. If we want to be viewed as proactive and strategic then we need to behave as such. To do this well and to sustain ongoing relevance, EAPs need skilled and experienced advisors/interventionists and this requires organizational support – both in financial resources and leadership involvement. We must also act responsibly as an industry and stop undermining our purpose and value through ‘irrational’ competitive practices. Who wins when our core services are ‘free’ or when organizations conclude that the EAP field is only an ‘add-on’ service?”

Mark Cohen, DSW, MPH, CEAP,
President, BEC Consulting
(New York City)

“The common thread in both of these articles is the need for EAPs to work collaboratively with customers to achieve

agreed-upon objectives. Thus, we need to change our service delivery paradigm so that is more focused on what the customer values in having an EAP. Internal EA programs will undoubtedly have an easier time in this mission since they already are a part of their respective work organizations, which affords more access to senior management and to company data. And in today’s marketplace, it’s all about the data. External EA programs will be challenged to obtain such access and to think partnering first and revenue enhancement second. But by not thinking ‘out of the box’ (i.e., the Proactive EAP), the future of our profession is questionable at best. In this regard, the authors could have been more helpful by providing some suggestions on how to achieve partnering with customers.”

Sandra Turner, PhD, MSW,
CEAP, Director, EY Assist, Ernst
and Young (Cleveland, Ohio),
President of the Employee
Assistance Roundtable (EAR) and
former President of the Employee
Assistance Professionals
Association (EAPA)

“Sharar, Bjornson and Mackenzie write passionately about the need for EAPs to deliver on the business client’s needs and values. I certainly agree. EAPs are successful when they deliver on the expressed, desired, and latent expectations of both the employee and the business client (and union representative) during each transaction. Doing such requires ‘high

touch’ in order to develop the relationship as a trusted advisor. And remember – as Attridge and Burke point out – delivering on the promise of a more productive workplace through healthier employees requires collaboration and sharing outcomes by the EAP with work/life, wellness, disability management, security, etc. EAPs should not go it alone. So instead of focusing only on the usual promotional strategies for encouraging employees and supervisors to utilize the EAP, think about establishing regular business meetings with leaders of the organization to co-create proactive solutions to their current business problems. Talk about raising the business value of EAP!” ❖



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A general partnership may be created by a *verbal* agreement, but it is customary and highly recommended that the partners define their rights and duties in a *written* agreement. A great deal of partnership law has been codified in state statutes.

A general partnership has “flow-through taxation” – in other words, the partnership entity does not pay taxes, but the individual partners are taxed on the income they receive from the partnership. All partners are jointly and severally liable for all obligations. Profits, losses, and distributions may be divided among the partners in any manner they choose, consistent with the partnership agreement or, absent an agreement, then according to state law.

➤ **Limited partnerships** are permitted in some states. They usually require a written limited partnership agreement and are formed by filing required documents with the appropriate state registration office. A limited partnership has one or more general partners and one or more limited partners. It is a separate entity distinct from its partners, it must include both *general* and *limited* partners, and it provides both limited liability and partnership protections. It may sue, be sued, defend in its known name, and maintain an action against a partner for harm caused to the limited partnership by a breach of the agreement or violation of a duty to the partnership.

General partners have management control, share the profits pursuant to agreement, and have joint liability for partnership debts. As agents of the partnership, they

have the authority to bind all other partners in contracts with third parties that are in the general course of the firm’s business.

Limited partners, on the other hand, do not have any management authority – and unless they have been held out to others as agents of the firm – they lack inherent agency authority. Their individual liability for the firm’s debts is limited to the extent of their registered investment. They are paid a return on their investment, similar to a corporate dividend, as provided by the partnership agreement.

➤ **Corporations**, the most complex form of business organization, are associations of individuals created under state statutes, with authority and liabilities independent of its stockholders. It is a “legal person,” an entity separate and distinct from the persons who control, manage, and own it. Bylaws and articles of incorporation govern it. As a separate legal entity, a corporation can conduct business, own corporate property, owe corporate debt, and is the debtor that gets sued – or the creditor or claimant who does the suing. The day-to-day management of a corporation is usually conducted through a board of directors and officers who are (usually) elected by the corporation’s stockholders.

Corporations must follow legal formalities, including adequate investment of money (capitalization) in the corporation, formal issuance of stocks to the initial shareholders, and maintain and update business records and

transactions separate from those of the owners. As long as the board of directors and shareholders comply with corporate formalities, including holding board meetings and paying franchise taxes and related obligations, a corporation largely insulates its shareholders from individual civil liability for acts and commissions of the business and its personnel.

Shareholder status does NOT, however, insulate a professional from *individual* liability as an employee or contractor of a corporation. This reality requires that each professional has individual liability insurance or that, by contract, the corporation is required to maintain such on behalf of the professional.

With certain important exceptions, corporate stockholders have *limited liability* for corporate obligations – they are not personally liable for debts incurred by the corporation and cannot be sued individually for corporate wrongdoings. A stockholder will be held *personally liable* if he or she treats the corporation as an extension of his/her personal property, rather than a separate entity; personally injures someone; has personally guaranteed a loan or business debt for the corporation that it fails to repay; fails to deposit taxes that have been deducted from employee wages by the corporation; or is part of intentional fraud or other illegal action that results in loss to the corporation (or someone else).

‘C’ and ‘S’ Corporations

Under the Internal Revenue Code, corporations may be designated as a “C” or an “S” corporation.

➤ A “C” corporation is taxed separately from its owners. Shareholders, who must elect a board of directors to make business decisions and oversee policies, are the owners. It must file its own income tax return and may have different rules in regard to depreciation of assets, payment of taxes, capital gains, income, and related tax matters. A profit is taxed to the corporation when earned, and then taxed to shareholders when distributed as dividends. Thus, profits are double taxed. A “C” corporation cannot deduct dividends paid to shareholders, but it *may* deduct expenses such as payroll. Shareholders cannot deduct corporate losses. In most cases, a “C” corporation is required to report its financial operations to the state in which it is organized. As an independent legal entity, the corporation does *not* cease to exist when its owners or shareholders change or die.

➤ Subchapter “S” corporation status provides shareholders with the protection of limited liability, as well as some appealing tax benefits – such as only paying taxes once through individual income tax returns if the “S” corporation elects to have flow-through taxation as if it were a partnership – in other words, income and losses are passed through to shareholders and included on individual tax returns. As a result, there is only one level of federal tax to pay. The specific requirements and benefits of this tax designation should be discussed with an accountant.

There are also membership requirements for an “S” corpo-

ration status. Only a domestic corporation may qualify, and there are restrictions on who can become members. There cannot be more than 100 shareholders, who may be individuals, certain trusts, and estates, but not partnerships, corporations, or non-resident alien shareholders. However, state laws differ in their treatment of “S” corporations. Some do not offer tax breaks – while others automatically honor the federal election. Consultation with an attorney in the corporation’s state is a *must*.

➤ **Professional corporations** – or PCs – are business organizations that allow individual professionals to practice in an association and offer many of the benefits of a corporation. A PC must have a unique name and may elect Subchapter S status. It must be organized for the sole purpose of rendering a designated professional service and may only be formed by the eligible professionals identified by statute. All shareholders must be licensed to render the specific professional service of the corporation. For instance, in a psychology corporation, all shareholders must be licensed psychologists.

The corporation cannot protect the shareholder professionals against their own negligence, but it *does* protect them against the negligence of *each other*. Thus, professional incorporation is a useful backup to professional liability insurance.

➤ The **limited liability company** (LLC) is a recently recognized business structure allowed

by state statute. Its members are insulated from personal liability for the debts and actions of the entity, and it provides management flexibility and the benefit of pass-through taxation. As with a sole proprietorship (explained in part one) or partnership, there is little if any insulation protecting the personal assets of a LLC’s members from a judgment resulting from their own wrongdoing in the course of LLC activities.

Because the federal government does not recognize the LLC as a classification for federal tax purposes, such entities must file a corporation, partnership or sole proprietorship tax return. There is also a lack of uniformity among limited liability company statutes. Businesses that operate in more than one state may not receive consistent treatment. Current federal and state laws must be examined to determine what is best for the entity.

Summary

Regardless of one’s practice, choosing the correct form of practice is imperative to reduce potential financial liability. For a minimal cost, organizing the practice as an entity offering some insulation from personal liability is well worth the expense. However, this decision must be made after: 1) soliciting the advice of an attorney who is familiar with mental health and human services law; and 2) discussing the limits imposed upon corporations or LLCs. ❖

Sandra Nye is the author of the popular Employee Assistance Law Book. She may be reached at sandra@nyelawyer.com.



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